Title: The Myth of Erk

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The story goes that in the beginning, when the Great Force that gave form to the world caused the first animals to arise, one of them, called Erk, after observing the things that were happening around him, turned in anguish to the Great Force and put these questions to her: "Why does everything have to be so hard, so difficult, so painful…? Why must some suffer and die so that others may live? Why must we struggle against one another? Why is it necessary to expend so much effort in order to get what we need to stay alive? Why didn't you make a simpler, an easier world in which everything would be more accessible, comfortable, and agreeable? What is the sense of so much suffering, so much discomfort, so much death?"

The Great Force knew the answer, but she also knew that Erk would understand it only through direct experience. Therefore, after listening to Erk's complaints and even though the Great Force knew that she had made no mistake in designing the world, she changed it so that Erk and his companions should discover the sense of things for themselves.

At first the Great Force thought that a few little changes would be enough to make them recognize the truth. So she softened the conditions of life for living things: She moderated the climate so that it would be more kindly to life, made access to food easier for the animals, prevented the deaths of the youngest individuals, reduced the number of accidents, diseases, and catastrophes as well as the suffering the victims had to endure. But Erk and his companions, after a brief period of euphoria, began again to complain that in this new version of the world there was still pain, that death still existed, that it was still a hostile world, a place that was too hard and too difficult for life.

Upon seeing this the Great Force decided to take drastic action in order to open the eyes of Erk and his companions. From that moment, everything was easy, comfortable, simple, and agreeable. No one suffered or died, or had to make any effort to procure the necessities of life. What was needed was obtained instantly and without effort. Nor was it necessary to be alert, since there were no dangers from which to protect oneself and no harm to fear. There were no conflicts, no aggression, and no confrontations of any kind among the animals or between them and their surroundings. The world was at peace. It seemed marvelous.

But after the initial rejoicing, a new and very disagreeable sensation began to arise, a symptom of a great problem where there were no problems, a profound malaise in the midst of that well-being:

Boredom. Due to the lack of motivation, of initiative, of goals, of incentives, of challenges, of activities…because of the prevailing indolence in those idyllic conditions the animals were bored. Since they didn’t need to make an effort for anything, worry about anything…they had nothing to do, nothing that was worth the trouble, nothing to motivate them, nothing that would push them to get up out of their lethargy and act. All the same, they were still animals and therefore felt within themselves an imperious need to act. And for this reason it happened that after a little while the animals grew so bored and so nauseated with this state of inactivity that, just in order to be able to do something and find an outlet for their instinctive need of action, they began to develop absurd behaviors that had nothing to do with those they had developed in the beginning before Erk had spoken to the Great Force. Because they had everything they needed, they began to desire other things that they did not need, just in order to be able to act and to exert themselves in getting those things. Thus they began to build, to destroy, to dig, to eat, to copulate, to run, to attack one another…compulsively and frenetically, and as a result many found their capacity for action seriously impaired, they suffered grave injuries, and they profoundly altered their habitat; but they did not stop acting that way, because they simply preferred to suffer all those consequences rather than endure the boredom of having nothing to do; at least these negative effects provided them with stimulation and sensations that kept their bodies and minds in working order and served in turn as a spur to act again under the pretext of palliating the same effects.

Upon seeing all of that, Erk finally understood. He turned to the Great Force again and said to her: "I have come to understand what was the sense of the world just as you created it in the beginning. I have come to understand that it should be that way and not the way that seemed to me more pleasant, because that is really the best way it can be. I have come to understand that when I saw no sense in the world it was because of my own weakness and ignorance, and because I didn't look at it in the right way or thinking properly. I allowed myself to be carried away by a mirage, and I disowned by real nature and the world to which I really belong. Now I know it, now I am stronger and I will never again fall into that error. Thank you, I have learned the lesson, but now please return the world to what is was originally."

Seeing that she had now achieved her objective, the Great Force made everything return to what it had been in the beginning.

So it was that Erk came to understand what was his place in the world and in life, as well as the sense of the world and of life. Since then we wild animals, generation after generation, have kept the memory of those events alive so that, like Erk, we will remember what is our place and what is our function, and so that we will not fall into the same error.

And even so, in spite of everything, many human beings have completely forgotten the story of Erk and live blinded by the same error, trying to create Paradise and immersing themselves and the world ever deeper in Hell.